

# THE INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

## OBSERVATIONS ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE

*By* STEPHEN P. DUGGAN, PH. D.



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## OBSERVATIONS ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE

*By Stephen P. Duggan, Ph.D., Director of the Institute of  
International Education*

The following article is the result of a visit made by the writer to the countries of western and southern Europe last summer and fall to study conditions of higher education there. In a brief article like this only the salient features can be mentioned. I shall first state those which apply to the European countries generally and then those which apply only to the individual countries. In each case I shall try to indicate how the educational relations between the foreign countries and the United States are affected.

### GENERAL

1. The universities of the allied countries, and, no doubt of the enemy countries, are very congested this year and will probably be so for the next few years. Large numbers of the men who have been in the army during the past four years have returned to the universities and these, with the normal annual addition, have placed great burdens upon the housing and teaching facilities of the universities. Oxford and Cambridge have been compelled to lighten the restrictions as to where students may reside in order that the students may be housed at all.

The chief result for the United States of this condition is an intensification in Europe of the belief already held by most educational authorities, that exchange of students between the United States and Europe should be confined to graduate students. As this is the opinion expressed by the majority of college presidents in this country in answer to a questionnaire which I addressed to them last spring, there is agreement upon the subject on both sides of the ocean.

2. Not only will the universities of Europe be congested with students this year but there will be a dearth of teachers. Some of the university professors who went into the service of the government have not yet been relieved of such service; a few, though not so many as in the United States, will not return to university work; a considerable number, especially among the younger teachers, were killed. The French universities especially have been hard hit by the war. At least 25 per cent of the teaching staff of all the lycées and universities were killed; the great school of Education, the *École Normale*, lost 80 per cent of its staff. As there could be no recruiting of teachers during the war owing to the absence of men at the front, the handicap is obvious.

The chief result for the United States of this dearth of teachers is the unwillingness of the foreign universities to spare teachers as exchange or visiting professors during the present year and possibly for the next few years, though, as will be indicated later on, there would be no refusal to a request made by an institution in the United States.

3. A desire, amounting to a determination, to enter into closer relations with the universities of the United States, was expressed by the educational authorities and university officials of all the countries I visited. The officers of the American army who became students in the French and British universities during the last semester made a most favorable impression. In Great Britain, France and Italy, modifications of the requirements for degrees have either been made or are contemplated, largely in order to make residence in their universities more attractive to Americans. I shall indicate what these are in discussing each country. Movements are on foot in practically all these countries to establish fellowships for the exchange of students. The desire to have American professors at their universities was expressed in every country, but because of the poverty in the foreign universities resulting from the war, such professors would have to be at least partially supported in their stay from funds provided in the United States. This will to a considerable extent be true of foreign students coming

to the universities of the United States, though no such suggestion was made by the people on the other side.

4. The British Government have invited representatives from all the universities of the British Empire to an imperial educational conference at London in July, 1921. In practically every country the hope was expressed that at the close of the British Imperial Conference, an international educational conference might be held at Geneva to which the delegates attending the London conference might go. If this hope is to be realized the United States must take the initiative. It is better off financially to undertake it, and it is free from the distrust with which some of the countries of Europe regard others. The hope was also generally expressed that the League of Nations would at an early date establish as one of its bureaus a Commission on Education.

5. Everywhere the hope was expressed that the university authorities in the United States might come to some agreement with those of foreign countries as to uniform treatment of each other's degrees. One prominent university in the United States accepts, e.g., the French Baccalaureat given at the close of the lycée course for admission to studies for the doctorate. Another, equally prominent, demands an additional year of preparation. A third demands two additional years of preparation. This diversity of treatment is confusing to the educational authorities in Europe. Moreover there is the greatest need in the European countries of an accredited list of American colleges whose degrees might be accepted by their universities. It is as well known there as here that many American colleges are but glorified high schools, but it is not as well known which are.

#### GREAT BRITAIN

1. Every one of the British universities has now established the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and this was in part due to a desire to have graduate students from the United States. Such students should know of the differ-



ence in method in graduate work in the American and in the British universities. Here, the graduate student is more or less suspect if he does not attend lectures; there, no attention is paid to his absence from lectures. Here, he receives considerable supervision in his work from his professors; there, he is expected to depend almost wholly upon his resources. At Oxford a man may have any amount of personal help but it is left to him to ask for it. This means that only responsible and self-reliant students should be sent from the United States to British universities.

2. The recent action of the Oxford authorities in abolishing one of the requirements for the Rhodes scholarships, viz., the examination in Greek, has received general approval in England as it is hoped that thereby a more typical body of men will come from the United States. As but about 1 per cent of students in American colleges study Greek, it is evident that Rhodes scholars, however excellent they may have been hitherto, cannot have been typical of American students. The action of Cambridge in abolishing the requirement of Greek for a degree will in all probability be followed by similar action at Oxford this scholastic year—at least for a degree in all subjects except Letters. This will, of course, make those universities more attractive to American students.

3. Provision for the education of women in Great Britain is much more generous than is generally supposed in the United States. Not only are there two colleges at Cambridge and four "halls" at Oxford, but every provincial university provides for them. Some of the hostels for women students at the provincial universities are very beautiful and commodious, and in the Scottish universities the accommodations are particularly generous. Glasgow University has more women students lodged in Queen Margaret College than any other British university. Nevertheless, the congestion in the women's colleges is as great as in the men's. Not only can no American women be received at Oxford and Cambridge this year, but only the best of the candidates for admission among British students have been selected. The suggestion has been made to

relieve congestion at Cambridge by the erection of another college for women, but it has by no means aroused universal enthusiasm there. They are agitating the admission of women to Oxford degrees, and the Associated Press recently carried a dispatch saying that the statute had been passed. Women have long been able to take examinations at Oxford and to get everything but the actual degree.

4. There exists a feeling in the British universities that the exchange of teachers between the universities of the two countries should not be confined to teachers of the highest grade. Teachers of that grade might come as "visiting" professors who would not spend all their time at one university but would deliver a series of lectures successively at several universities. On the other hand, a real knowledge of the relative advantages of the systems of educational administration in the two countries might best be secured were a teacher of the grade of assistant professor in an American university to undertake the regular work of a teacher of similar grade in an English university and vice versa. The American teacher would probably return enthusiastic for a system wherein he need not devote nearly all of his time to recitations and administrative work, but might have the necessary leisure to keep informed of the advances made in his subject.

5. The provincial universities have always received grants from the government, but Oxford and Cambridge have until recently refused such grants, fearing governmental control of their policies. All the universities were hard hit by the war, however, and last year even the two old universities asked for grants. Mr. Fisher at once appointed a commission to study their financial status. It is obvious, I think, that an evolution is taking place in Oxford and Cambridge towards an organization in which the colleges will count for less and the university for more. No college has sufficient funds to provide the facilities for laboratories and libraries required by modern education. The university has practically no funds. But it is significant that whatever gifts have been made in recent years to Oxford and Cambridge have been made to the university



and not to one of the colleges. There is a strong movement on foot in England to interest people of wealth to support higher education in the way such people do in the United States.

6. Even before the war, the desire for closer relations with the universities of foreign countries had existed in the universities of Great Britain and had resulted in the establishment of the Universities Bureau of the British Empire. Last year the government appropriated £5000 for its use and it has opened extensive headquarters at 50 Russell Square, London. Certainly there is great need of knowledge in each country about the systems of higher education in others, and the establishment in each of a central clearing house of information and advice is the first step in supplying the need.

#### FRANCE

1. The British universities are not the only ones that hope that the stream of students which formerly flowed to Germany may be diverted to other shores. The French justifiably believe that many such students will hereafter seek graduate work with them. A strong belief is held in France that it would be to the advantage of an American student to spend his first year in a provincial university and his second at Paris rather than both at Paris. There are few subjects in which French provincial universities have not eminent teachers, and the life in a provincial university town is more typical of French life than is that of Paris. American students going to France on scholarships ought to receive advice about the possibilities of study in the provincial universities as well as at Paris. In fact, the need of a comprehensive booklet on opportunities for study in France is more pronounced when one considers the independent institutions that are not controlled by the Ministry of Public Instruction. Most technical schools in France come within the supervision of the *Ministère du Commerce*; some are municipal undertakings, and such splendid institutions as the School of Tropical Medicine at Bordeaux, the School of Decorative Art at Limoges, or even the School

of Commerce at Paris might not be listed in a publication of the ministry of public instruction.

2. Several of the French universities have summer sessions and at the provincial universities especially, excellent courses in the French language and literature have been organized for the benefit of teachers from Great Britain and the United States. The French are anxious also that the practice should be revived whereby groups of students were organized annually before the war in both countries to visit places of interest throughout France during the summer vacation.

3. The interest in attracting American students to French universities has resulted in several changes. In Paris and other universities, special courses for foreign students have been added to the regular courses, such as Cours de Civilisation française, and Cours de droit. The Medical School of Paris has started graduate courses open to all fully qualified graduates of American Medical Schools on the accredited list. Moreover, clinical teaching has been placed on a broader basis than before the war, and most of the lectures are provided with summaries in English, Spanish and Portuguese.

4. In addition to the Licence ès Lettres, Licence ès Sciences and Diplôme d'Etudes supérieures which are accessible to American students having the bachelor's degree from accredited institutions, the French universities have two doctorate degrees to offer to graduate and research students:

*a. Doctorat ès Lettres or ès Sciences*, sometimes known as "Doctorat d'Etat" because it is conferred by the state and is the essential qualification which university lecturers and professors are expected to possess. To secure this degree a candidate must already have obtained the Licence ès Lettres or ès Sciences; the theses represent years of research. For these reasons, the average Frenchman does not seek this degree, which is secured by a few specialists only; foreign students seldom secure it at all. It may be noted, however, that the Doctorat d'Etat of either description is open to foreign students whose qualifications

have been accepted by the French Minister for Public Instruction as equivalent to the *Licence ès Lettres* or *ès Sciences*.

b. *Doctorat d'Université*—(Sciences, Literature, Medicine, Law, Pharmacy)—is conferred by a university, not by the government, and does not entitle its holder to a lectureship in a French university. Candidates should possess either the *Licence ès Lettres* or *ès Sciences* or any such diplomas as may prove acceptable to the university council. There is a requirement of four semesters of work and the presentation of a thesis. As most Frenchmen who seek a doctorate do so with the intention to lecture in a French university, the *Doctorat d'Université* is mostly sought after by foreigners. Hence there is a feeling among some that it is an inferior degree. This is wholly wrong. The degree is in every way the equivalent of the German or American Ph.D. Following the controversy that arose sometime ago in France over the respective merits of the state doctorate, several changes have been suggested which would meet the case of the foreigner. It is probable that the French universities will consult the American universities with a view to the establishment of a scheme that would insure a better selection and more thorough supervision of such American students as might wish to obtain the *Doctorat d'Université*.

5. The French educational authorities are so anxious to continue spreading French culture and influence abroad that they will always find the necessary exchange or visiting professors. It must be remembered that it is far more difficult for an American professor to teach in a French university than vice versa. A graduate student in a French university seeking the doctor's degree has a much greater stake in passing the examination than does an American student, for success entitles him to a state position with valuable rewards and emoluments. The French professor, therefore, has certain definite responsibilities which would be difficult for an American professor in his place to assume.

6. Greater progress in the exchange of students with the United States has been made by France than by any other

country. In addition to the pre-war fellowships that enabled our students in the various fields of art to study in Paris, others have been founded since the war. The Association of American Fellowships in French Universities this year established ten such, worth \$1000 each, and expect to increase the number to twenty-five. The French government has also established twenty scholarships for American girls in French Lycées covering tuition, board and lodging, and two in the Ecole Normale de Sèvres. Two years ago, 120 French girls were given scholarships in American colleges and universities under the auspices of the Association of American Colleges. This year, the total number of French girls in residence has been increased to 181. 26 men have also been distributed among the leading American institutions. Most of these men are graduate students in economics, medicine, engineering and law. Moreover the American army students who spent a semester in French universities, after the armistice, collected 75,000 francs from which to allot 5355 francs to each of fourteen French universities to enable its representative to study this year in a university of the United States. These relationships have become so important that, thanks to funds provided by the French government, the "Office National des Universités et Ecoles françaises" has been able to appoint a permanent representative in the United States, who is in charge of all university relationships with the United States. In New York as well as in Paris, the Office National des Universités is acting as a bureau of information with a view to organizing university affairs with foreign nations.

### ITALY

1. Except students of art or of the classics who study in the American School at Rome, few American students go to Italy for purposes of study. It is equally true that few Italian students enter American universities. Of the four great culture nations of western Europe, Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany, Italy has had the least influ-

ence culturally upon the United States. In this respect the millions of Italian immigrants have had practically no influence. They are almost wholly of the laboring class, entirely devoted to improving their material condition, and are ignorant of the glorious contributions of their country to art, science and literature. Moreover, the Italian Government and the intellectual class have until recently not been animated, as have the French, by a great desire to spread the influence of the national culture throughout the world. The Alliance Française is an international institution. The Società Dante Alighieri is relatively unknown.

The war has effected a change in this respect. The great outpouring of sympathy and assistance for stricken France on the part of Americans astonished the Italians, who believed themselves equally deserving of it but failed to receive it in anything like the same degree. They rightly ascribe their failure partially to an ignorance of their country and culture by Americans, which they are most anxious to remove. They are very desirous to establish a system of exchange of professors between Italy and the United States. Despite the fact that few American professors speak Italian and few Italian professors speak English, such an exchange is by no means impossible. In fact, a distinguished Italian professor is lecturing in the colleges of the United States this year, who will in all probability remain next year. And a distinguished American professor will lecture in the Italian universities next year. The Italians would also welcome American students to their universities, and there is much for an American student to learn in Italy in addition to the classics and the various branches of art.

#### SWITZERLAND

1. Nowhere did I meet a greater anxiety for closer co-operation with the United States than in Switzerland. The great desire of the Swiss to intensify the spirit of national unity which was roused by the war resulted in a considerable exchange of students between the universities of French and of German Switzerland. Now they wish to extend this



movement to other countries. There have always been large numbers of foreign students at the Swiss universities, especially at Zurich and Geneva. They come, however, chiefly from central and eastern Europe and the Balkans—few from the United States and western Europe. The Swiss understand that the flow of American and English students to German universities will be stopped for some years at least and they would like to see it diverted to Switzerland. They believe that the universities of German Switzerland can give the best developments of German culture to foreign students without any of its unpleasant associations, and they are deliberately starting out to organize ways and means to attract them, especially Americans and British. In all probability the exponents of German culture who will visit the United States for some years to come will be professors from Switzerland.

2. The seven universities of Switzerland are all cantonal and, like the universities of the United States, are not all of equal importance. They are found at Basle, Berne, Zurich, Geneva, Lausanne, Fribourg and Neuchâtel. The lack of unity among them is shown in the efforts made by the individual universities to make themselves known in other countries. Basle, for example, has recently published a catalog in English, for distribution in England and the United States, which has not only full descriptions of courses, terms, fees and degrees but of living expenses, social opportunities and sports. In addition it is beautifully illustrated. Last year the Swiss Association of University Professors was formed, and it is hoped there will result a greater unity of effort among the seven institutions.

## SPAIN

1. Two years ago a devoted band of Spanish scholars and educators determined that the Spanish universities should be put abreast of those of the other countries of western Europe. The two essentials in accomplishing this were the removal of the blight of extreme centralization in higher education and the grant of sufficient funds to intro-



duce research upon a worthy scale. These were secured last year, and a complete revolution took place in the administration of Spanish higher education. From being the most completely centralized system it has become the most completely decentralized. Every one of the eleven universities are made absolutely autonomous. The connecting bond is the Board of Higher Studies, to which has been granted a considerable annual appropriation of money to encourage research and to organize close relationships with other countries.

2. The Spaniards have finally awakened to the opportunity which has been so long at their doors to enter into closer relations with the Spanish-speaking countries of the two Americas, and an earnest effort is being made to do so. Next May a congress will be held in Madrid of representative students from all the Latin-American countries of North and South America which, it is hoped, will result in a steady flow of students from those countries to the mother country. But the Board of Higher Studies will not confine its attention to the Spanish-American countries. It has noted that more than 200,000 students in the United States are studying Spanish and has organized a scheme to take advantage of this interest in Spanish culture in order to develop closer cultural relations with the United States.

*a.* It has arranged to invite research professors from the United States to go to Spain at the expense of the Board to train the brightest of their young men in modern research methods.

*b.* It has arranged to send Spanish graduate students to American universities upon government fellowships.

*c.* It has already organized courses in the Spanish language and literature which are given in Madrid during the summer vacations for teachers from foreign countries, especially English-speaking countries. The Board has arranged that the transportation, tuition and living expenses shall be reduced to a minimum.

*d.* It has organized for foreign students courses not only in the Spanish languages and literature but in other subjects

like Spanish history and the history of Moorish art. It has provided a dormitory in Madrid for women students where they can live under the most suitable conditions and at a minimum expense.

e. It has arranged to assist Spanish residents in New York and in other important cities of the United States to establish a Casa Española which will be a center of Spanish culture where lectures, art exhibits, musicales and other activities may be held.

No better method for developing international good will exists than the establishment of intimate relations between the universities of different countries by means of the interchange of teachers and especially of students. It would be difficult to calculate the influence that the German universities exerted upon American culture and education through the hundreds of students from our universities that studied in them. I venture to express the belief, however, that although some American students will always go to foreign universities to study special subjects, the number will never reach anything like that which formerly prevailed. Even before the war it was a diminishing number, and the war increased the confidence of Americans in their own universities. In fact, so great has been the admiration in foreign countries for the achievement of the United States in the war that in all probability the stream of student travel will be directed to our country rather than from it. Foreign students may be expected to come in increasing numbers to our universities to study the applied sciences, medicine, engineering, agriculture, education, social service, business administration and journalism. And although in the years immediately succeeding the war it should be the pleasure of Americans to help the stricken countries of Europe to educate their young men and women upon fellowships in our universities, that should be a passing phenomenon. The thousands of foreign students who crowded the German universities before the war were attracted to them not by scholarships, for none existed. They went because they believed they could get what

they wanted in the German universities better than anywhere else. I am convinced that the same opinion will be increasingly held of the American universities and that thousands of foreign students will be attracted to them without scholarships. It is to be hoped that American university authorities will devote some attention to providing for their comfort, convenience and happiness as well as for their studies.



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